

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 were pending in this application.

Claims 19-23 were previously withdrawn from consideration and are hereby cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 1, 2, 8-11, 17, and 18 have been rejected.

Claims 3-7 and 12-16 have been objected to.

Claims 1, 4, 5, 10, 13, and 14 have been amended as shown above.

Claims 3, 12, and 19-23 have been cancelled.

Claims 1, 2, 4-11, and 13-18 remain pending in this application.

Reconsideration and full allowance of Claims 1, 2, 4-11, and 13-18 are respectfully requested.

I. ALLOWABLE CLAIMS

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that Claims 3-7 and 12-16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to incorporate the elements of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. The Applicants have amended Claim 1 to incorporate the elements recited in Claim 3 and have amended Claim 5 to stand in independent form. The Applicants have also amended Claim 10 to incorporate the elements recited in Claim 12 and have amended Claim 14 to stand in independent form. Based on these amendments, the Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1, 5, 10, and 14 are in condition for allowance.

II. REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action rejects Claims 1, 2, 10, and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,202,888 to Pollock et al. (“*Pollock*”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,032,776 to Hieb (“*Hieb I*”). The Office Action rejects Claims 1, 2, 8-11, 17, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Pollock* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,945,427 to Hieb (“*Hieb II*”). The Office Action rejects Claims 1, 2, 10, and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,561,380 to Suzuki (“*Suzuki*”) in view of *Pollock*. The Office Action rejects Claims 1, 2, 10, and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Pollock* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,799,823 to Feltrin (“*Feltrin*”). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As noted above in Section I, the Applicants have amended Claim 1 to incorporate the elements recited in Claim 3 and have amended Claim 10 to incorporate the elements recited in Claim 12. The Applicants have also amended Claims 5 and 14 to stand in independent form. Given the indication that Claims 3-7 and 12-15 are patentable, Claims 1, 5, 10, and 14 as amended are patentable over the cited references.

Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the § 103 rejections and full allowance of Claims 1, 5, 10, and 14 (and their dependent claims).

CONCLUSION

The Applicants respectfully assert that all pending claims in this application are in condition for allowance and respectfully request full allowance of the claims.

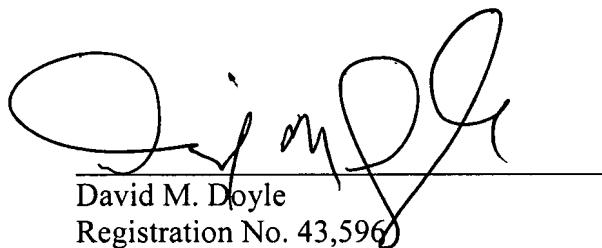
If any issues arise or if the Examiner has any suggestions for expediting allowance of this application, the Applicants respectfully invite the Examiner to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below or at *ddoyle@munckbutrus.com*.

The Applicants have included the appropriate fee to cover the cost of this AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees connected with this communication (including any extension of time fees) or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0208.

Respectfully submitted,

MUNCK BUTRUS, P.C.

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